

Home Front

AUGUST—
SEPTEMBER
1942

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This picture of troops at tank practice was taken during a "mock invasion" of London. A

SECOND FRONT NOW

will prevent
this ever
becoming
a reality.



See page 3

● There is activity of a new kind stirring the countryside. You will be interested in this news about farm workers, sent to HOME FRONT

By a Special Correspondent

AGRICULTURAL workers in Hertfordshire, employed by the County War Agricultural Executive Committee have formed a Joint Production Committee with the management.

Already one scheme put forward by the workers is producing good results. A repair shop has been set up in a travelling van. This van visits the six depots of the War Agricultural Executive Committee, spending a month in each.

The tractors, of which the Committee owns and uses a large number, are driven in to the depot in turn and put through a performance by their own driver. The trained mechanics attached to the travelling van watch the performance with a critical eye, then give the tractor a thorough overhaul in the driver's presence.

The driver tells the mechanics what he finds wrong with the machine; and in their turn they advise him on how to keep it working better and avoid mistakes. The overhaul is completed in a day, and the driver learns more about his machine than he finds in weeks of study or lectures.

This scheme is greatly increasing the effective tractor hours, and in this way helping to produce more food.

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From other areas, too, comes news of activity by agricultural workers. In Kent a series of Production Rallies has been organised by the National Union of Agricultural Workers, an outstanding feature of which has been the unity with industrial workers.

At Ash, for example, platform speakers included miners, while at Strood a shop steward from an aircraft factory was the speaker. Botteshanger miners are to visit the local N.U.A.W. Branch, and an invitation to an agricultural worker to attend an aircraft shop stewards' meeting has been readily accepted.

A further development is that branches of the Union are affiliating to the local Trades Councils throughout the area, making them representative of both town and country workers.

TRAVELLING VAN IS THE REPAIR SHOP

FOUR proposals to meet the "urgency of the present situation" were put forward at a meeting of Land Army girls at the B Hay hostel.

These were:—

to increase the Women's Land Army by making life in it more attractive, especially by increasing leave and free rail passes up to the level of the Armed Forces;

to start intensive training in Land Work and the use of agricultural machinery for women;

to stamp out resolutely the last traces of prejudice against female labour;

and, on the basis of increased numbers and skill of the Women's Land Army, to release a proportionate number of men for the Armed Forces, and to open immediately the Second Front in Europe.

Meetings on the Second Front have been held in two other Land Army hostels in the area.

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FACTS given by the Minister of Agriculture in his review of the position (House of Commons, July 27), included the following: Milk production is up by 10 million gallons over the best pre-war year, although experts say that a still greater increase is possible by measures for controlling disease and increasing the yield of a cow.

The Women's Land Army has increased by nearly 200 per cent in the last 12 months (but when it is remembered that the figure last year was the low one of 15,000 only, the present 40,000 seems small enough).

A noticeable omission from the debate, however, was the key question of increasing arable acreage to produce food for direct human consumption. This vital question received only one brief reference from the Minister, that he had "asked farmers to plough up an additional half million acres in the coming season."

LIBRARY

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Home Front Says:

THE decisive stage of the whole war has now been reached.

Hitler has taken the great gamble of pouring in, on a narrow sector of the Russian front, the greatest concentration of men and Panzer divisions ever known in military history.

He is desperately striving to win a decisive success before the coming of winter. No longer can he think of an offensive along the whole 1,000 mile front. His drive into the Caucasus aims at crippling the fighting power of the Red Army not by large-scale destruction of the Red troops, but by depriving them of vital economic regions, particularly the rich oil fields, and by cutting communications between the Southern, Central and Northern sectors.

In this, he is taking great risks. The further his fascist bandit armies penetrate into the depths of the Caucasus, the more difficult become his problems of supplies and reserves. He leaves himself open to the danger of offensive action by the Red Armies on other sectors of the far-flung front, which will take further heavy toll of the already seriously depleted Nazi man-power.

the Second Front is organised. His supporters in Britain, the pro-fascist forces, fight to win time for him. They speed up their intrigues and behind-the-scenes activity, aiming at holding back and sabotaging the Second Front.

Every difficulty is magnified a thousand-fold. Every excuse for delay and hesitation is emphasized out of all proportion. Treacherous attacks are made on the Soviet Union in an effort to break the solidarity between the fighting Soviet peoples and the people of this country. No argument, however weak and threadbare, is left unused in an attempt to weaken the fighting spirit of British men and women, to confuse and divert them from the path along which alone lies Britain's hope of victory.

Expose these people! Build such a mass movement of the people as will leave the Government no alternative but to curb these fifth-column activities and launch the Second Front offensive without further delay!

The Second Front is no foolhardy project.

True, it involves grave military and political risks; but it will save the lives of mil-

DELAY SPELLS DISASTER

Hitler's difficulty is the Allies' opportunity

One after another, anti-fascist fighters who succeed in escaping from occupied territory and reach British shores report that the people of occupied France await with growing impatience the arrival of an Allied Army of invasion.

There is, too, ample evidence that the British, Canadian and U.S.A. soldiers are all keenly anxious for the chance of getting to grips with the Nazi armies on the Continent.

Who can doubt that if the Government subordinated all other considerations to the organisation of a Second Front, the necessary sea transport of all types could be assembled, capable of landing a powerful army; that our invading armies could supply with arms and ammunition the anti-fascist fighters in the occupied countries, powerfully supplementing their own striking power? The response of the French people at St. Nazaire is the living proof of this.

Hitler stakes everything on decisive measures prior to the onset of winter and before

lions, even though it will involve heavy sacrifices. It will put an end to Hitler's victories, won because he has been able to tackle his enemies one by one. It will guarantee that British men and women "never shall be slaves" under the Nazi whip. It can spell an early victory for the United Nations. Success will bring with it the eternal doom and destruction of Fascism throughout the world. With such a glittering prize, the risk is indeed worth the taking.

What is the alternative? Delay, to the point where the combined strength of the Axis powers will be enabled to achieve from the military point of view an overwhelmingly superior position to that of the Democratic Nations. Delay, that will be disastrous in its effects for the peoples of Britain, the U.S.A., and the Soviet Union.

With this at stake at this grave moment, it is the duty of every anti-fascist to develop, with unexampled energy and determination, new heights of support and action for the Second Front NOW.

Please Note!

THE ballot of the members of the Amalgamated Engineering Union on the question of admitting women into the union has been concluded. As HOME FRONT goes to press, the result of the ballot is awaited with interest.

Meanwhile, the Union has reached an important decision with the employers regarding the thirty-two weeks' training period for women entering the industry under war-time conditions.

It has been decided that the time spent in Government Training Centres shall henceforth count as part of the qualifying period.

* * *

The Transport and General Workers' Union is proceeding with a claim for an increase of 12s. a week on the minimum wage paid to women in engineering work. The present basic rate of 25s., plus the 18s. war bonus guarantees a minimum wage of 43s. for a 47 hour week. An additional 12s. would bring the rate appreciably nearer to the minimum wage paid by Government agreement to women in Royal Ordnance Factories. This is 59s. in provincial workshops and 62s. in London.

In Hayes (Mddx.) a Campaign Committee has been set up by women from a number of engineering factories to press for the R.O.F. rate to apply to them.

The new claim is very much along the lines of the proposals made at the Third Session of the London Women's Parliament in June, when the low rate of women's wages and the failure to pay the rate for the job were held responsible for a great deal of dissatisfaction and frequently for impeding production.

Contrary to loose statements made by people outside the engineering factories, women engineers in general are not earning fabulous wages. According to the official enquiry in January last, the average wage was 53s. 7d., after taking into consideration overtime and piecework earnings.

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On the question of piecework for women, lieu rates and rates for girls, the National Union of General and Municipal Workers and the Transport and General Workers' Union have lodged a joint application for a discussion, in an attempt to get the situation revised and to ensure greater incentives to output.

These demands, tabled as a result of demands coming from the women in the workshops, are a testimony to the results of improved trade union organisation. There is still considerable room, however, for improvement in this direction, and ample scope for a stronger drive to increase membership amongst the womenfolk.

ROSE SMITH



C R A C

BBRITAIN'S Young Communists have swung into action behind the slogan of their great Summer Campaign—"Conquer Your Future Now!"

In an interview with a HOME FRONT reporter, Mick Bennett, National Secretary of the Young Communist League, described how Y.C.Lers are getting down to the business of beating Hitler, tackling every job that comes along and setting an example to everyone else in their keenness and enthusiasm.

Here are a few of the most outstanding examples mentioned by Mick Bennett.

* * *

JIMMY Marshall, of Kirkcaldy Y.C.L. works 12 hours a day in a local engineering shop. On Friday night, July 17, the press shop crane broke down, threatening to hold up production for the next week.

Starting work at 6 o'clock on Saturday morning, Jimmy volunteered for the job of repairing the crane, together with another Y.C.Ler, Dick Docherty. Instead of stopping work at mid-day as it was early day, the two lads worked on making the repairs till seven at night.

Jimmy stayed on, with pauses for meals and along with a journeyman worker, through the night until at 7 o'clock the next morning the last part was finished.

summer Campaign of the Young Communist League has three aims:—
 Britain's youth in a 100% war effort scism;
 for a square deal for youth now;
 for all young people to fight for a future to be truly theirs.

To achieve these aims, we need a strong and Young Communist League. We have set the aim of 25,000 members by September. Ask all young men and women who support these aims to join our ranks right away. They are at Premier House, 150 Southampton Road, W.C.1."

MICK BENNETT

GET WORKING!

The crane was able to go into action again after 25 hours of continuous labour.

* * *

ON the food front, too, the Y.C.L. is playing its part. Middlesex War Agricultural Committee put through an urgent telephone call to the London Y.C.L. "A local farmer needs 25 youngsters to save his sweet corn crop; it's going to ruin through weeds. Can you do anything?"
 67 Y.C.Lers turned up to clear the weeds; the crop was saved; and the farmer, expressing his delight, declared that he had never had such enthusiastic and disciplined workers.

August 31 is National Land Day for all Young Communist League members and their friends, when every one of them will be out on the land helping to bring in the harvest. This has been arranged in response to the recent appeal made in Parliament for such voluntary workers.

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Target Beaten

A NEW branch of the Young Communist League, more than 50 strong, is leading the production drive at Betteshanger Colliery in Kent. Since the Y.C.L. was formed, the Colliery has twice over-fulfilled its weekly target, once by 136 tons and the

other time (in spite of a haulage breakdown) by 116 tons. The Young Communists have set themselves the aim of getting the pit to achieve a regular quota of 500 tons per week above the target figure.

* * *

Holidays At Home

AS part of the "Holidays at Home" drive, the London Young Communist League held a gala on August Bank Holiday, attended by thousands of war workers and their families.

Side-shows, sporting events, dancing, variety entertainment, boxing displays, and all the "fun of the fair" went to make a great success of this ambitious effort at the Alexandra Palace.

Woodgreen Housewives' Club helped towards the success by the well-run kiddies creche it organised in the grounds

* * *

Youth Week

THIRTY youth organisations took part in Harrow's Youth Week.

Hard work in various forms of youth service was a feature of the week; as well as a Youth Parliament at which a bill for raising the school-leaving age to 18 was debated, and a Rally at which the Young Communist League presented a tableau on "The Struggle for Freedom through the Ages."

* * *

Blood Donors

AT an open-air meeting in Kirkcaldy, a call was made for blood donors. 42 young people from the crowd volunteered and immediately went round to the hospital to give in their names. When a doctor asked if anyone would give a blood transfusion at once, every one of the youngsters stepped forward.

* * *

International Youth Day

SEPTEMBER 6, International Youth Day, will witness many an enthusiastic rally of young people under the banners of the Y.C.L. Besides being the culminating date of the whole Summer Campaign, it will also mark the close of the special Production Week, during which every Young Communist in industry will be going all out to set new records in output. Mass demonstration and meetings are planned for this date in London and many important provincial centres.

'JUST LIKE OLD TIMES' — Commons Policeman

JULY 29 was "Daily Worker" National Deputation Day, when 1,500 delegates came to London to convince their Members of Parliament that the ban must be lifted without any further delay or monkey business.

Workers from all branches of industry, professional people, parsons, trade unionists, Labour councillors—they represented nearly 350 constituencies, covering all the great industrial centres and many rural areas, not forgetting the Isle of Wight.

Sensation of the day was the "Daily Worker," a copy of which was presented to each delegate, and which was described as "what the 'Daily Worker' would have looked like if it had been published on Monday, July 27, 1942."

What scenes in the House of Commons! "Just like old times," said a policeman, recalling the days of the Suffragettes and the unemployed. A great queue was formed outside the visitors' entrance and several M.P.s came into the street to announce their presence and look for their constituents. Admitted in batches of forty, the delegates dominated the centre lobby which was occupied by groups of people in whose midst a harassed individual could be detected as the Member of Parliament.

Lobbying went on from late morning until late in the afternoon, but by three o'clock several hundred of the delegates were on their way to visit other institutions.

The largest deputation was the one to the Home Office, which numbered over 300. Thirty Labour Party members went off to the headquarters of the Labour Party; a group of leading trade unionists set out in search of Sir Walter Citrine; some forty members of the T. and G.W.U. made for the headquarters of that union, where they commandeered the conference hall and sat there until received by one of the leading officials.

The Labour Party delegation were very dissatisfied with their reception, which they described as "bureaucratic in the extreme." At No. 10 Downing Street, the delegates were received with great courtesy, but very little else; an official assured them that their memorandum would be placed before Mr. Churchill, Herbert Morrison was too busy to see the deputation which called on him;

while the deputation to the T.U.C. was received by a minor official who stated that the question of the "Daily Worker" would be decided at the T.U.C. in September. In turn the delegates assured him that they knew this already and that there would be a big majority for the "Daily Worker."

At a reporting-back meeting of all delegates, George Allison, made a number of proposals for following up this splendid day's activity—by giving full reports to the organisations they represented, by keeping up pressure on M.P.s and by winning more support in the trade unions.

Winding up the proceedings, Bill Russell emphasized the seriousness of the situation and declared that the fight for lifting the ban had become inseparable from the fight for the opening of the Second Front, in which the fate of Britain depended.

Prompt Action Gets Results

PROMPT and successful action by the Production Committees are among the most interesting events of the last month. In the first instance, a Pit Production Committee in Scotland prevented a threatened reduction in coal output and by its action secured the dismissal of a mining company's surveyor. In the other a new bonus scheme for the tool room drawn up by the Production Committee at a North-West aircraft factory, has resulted in a 200% increase in the production of tools.

Of 160 men employed in the Garral Pit, Ayrshire, 50 were threatened with dismissal when the management announced intention of closing one section on grounds that it was "uneconomical." Considering that this was no time for any action likely to reduce coal output, the Pit Production Committee proposed as an alternative that the road in this section be widened and conveyors put in. This was opposed

(cont. on next page)

the manager who was supported by the company's surveyor.

The Pit Committee then got in touch with the Ministry of Mines Inspector who supported their proposal and took the matter up strongly with the management. As a result, the surveyor was dismissed by the directors and the manager agreed to work on a trial period of three months; and if at the end of that period his work is found unsatisfactory, he has agreed voluntarily to leave the job.

In the aircraft factory, the Production Committee were faced with the position of needing a colossal amount of tools, jigs, etc. in order to achieve the programme at which they aimed. Existing production of tools was proving quite inadequate.

The Production Committee evolved a scheme by which, taking the average tool production for the past six months, 1% bonus would be paid for each tool produced over and above this amount, the bonus to be in addition to the "Bevin" Agreement. The progressing system, control of material and other ideas for speeding the job were so incorporated.

After one week, the scheme has resulted in a 200% increase in tool production. "The spirit in the Tool Room is amazing," writes the secretary of the Production Committee. Everyone is concerned with the rapid production of their job; the Machine Section, which is usually holding up the shop is now waiting for work. We will get this programme completed without the need for sub-contractors now."

138,840 dinners were provided in Leeds school canteens during the four weeks ending 11th July. 1,406 children received free meals.

During the 4 weeks ending June 26, 48,096 bottles of milk were supplied free to school children. The total number of bottles of milk supplied to the school children of the city over the same period was 879,600.

MEAGRE PENSIONS AWARD

"IT is quite clear, that the unsatisfactory nature and conclusion of the debate will force the whole question once again right into the foreground at an early date," was the comment made by Mr. Wm. Gallagher, M.P., on the Old Age Pensions debate at the end of July.

This comment is being borne out by the stream of resolutions coming from pensioners' organisations in Scotland, England, and Wales, and from many working class organisations, in which bitter disappointment is expressed at the meagre award of 2s. 6d. on the supplementary pension, and the demand for a 30s. pension without the indignities of the Means Test is reiterated.

The award is estimated to cost £9½ million a year.

Women Demand Action

A SIGNIFICANT feature of the demand for the immediate opening of the Second Front is the growing number of women's organisations, and particularly of dependants of men in the Armed Forces, who are taking part.

"We don't want double sugar or cheese rationing. We want the Second Front now," reads a telegram sent to the Prime Minister by "70 women shoppers" after a shopping centre meeting in Wythenshawe.

"We understand it will not exactly be a picnic," declares a letter on the Second Front now circulating amongst workers (mainly women) at the L.M.S. Camden Goods Depot. "We are willing to make different sacrifices such as working extra time or being called up for the Armed Forces or other essential duties. We will do everything in our power to help get supplies through." Thirty-four signatures to the letter were obtained on the first day. Similarly, from the nearby Depot at Kentish Town, 150 postcards were sent to the Prime Minister in one day.

Ninety wives, mothers, and sisters of serving men lobbied M.P.s and called at 10 Downing Street to see Mrs. Churchill on July 30. Drawn from factories and housewives' clubs throughout the Greater London area, the deputation represented some 40,000 women factory workers.

From Newcastle comes news of 300 dependants of men in the Armed Forces who, in addition to organising a petition for increased allowances, are sending a deputation to their M.P. to demand the opening of the Second Front.



Dear Friends—

I DECIDED last November to go to the factory to produce war material. My husband and family did not want me to go; at the age of 56 they thought I had done my share of work. But I did not take any notice of them, I went, started to help produce the Whitley Bomber. I thought I should never do the work that was my lot to do.

Well, I lost some sweat, but I intend to stick it, in spite of the fact that I have all the housework to do, as well as the horrible shopping.

When my neighbours heard of me going, they all started too, some short time, and some full time. Now one of the women said to me that she was pleased she was doing her bit, for standing in queues wasn't much use. We had better help in making war material to beat Hitler, for if we didn't our life would be worse than ever. This woman has two children going to school and one girl of 14 just started work.

We are doing men's work, but only getting woman's pay; and the workers would not take much persuading to down tools against the cheap labour. But we can't take this action; we are fighting Hitler and if we take strike action, well, Hitler would be delighted, and we had better carry on the way we are rather than give him ground.

I went round the shop, got 50 or 60 girls to join the Trade Union, and got them to vote on the Production Committee. Many of them did not know what it was for, so I explained it was to give us a chance in the controlling of industry, to get to know something about the job, to set ourselves a quota of planes a month and to find out where things were going wrong. So the girls went up to vote.

Russian women have worked and sacrificed to build up a better system than we have, where the women are not exploited by bosses but are on equal terms with the men. And now they are facing death, many of them.

Too long have we been kept in domestic slavery. Let us get out of the old rut, and show our brave Soviet women allies that we can sacrifice and work for victory as they are doing.

S. JOBSON

writes Mrs.
JOBSON,
56 year old
mother
from the
Midlands,
who is
'sticking it'
in an
aircraft
factory.



A SPECIAL two weeks' drive for women workers is being made in Accrington (Lancs.) at the end of August. The urgent demand for more women made by an important local firm, led to a meeting called by the Accrington "M.P.s" of the Lancashire Women's Parliament in conjunction with the firm and the Ministry of Labour.

At this meeting plans were laid for a mass canvass throughout the town to recruit women into industry. The town has been divided into five sections, a member of the Women's Parliament being responsible in each section for arranging the canvass.

A special leaflet, with questionnaire attached, has been issued for use in the canvass, and arrangements have been made for the loudspeaker van of the Ministry of Information to accompany the canvassers one day in each area. In addition, a special poster is being used throughout the town.

61 people were present at the meeting, including the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Education Committee, a representative of the Mayor, welfare supervisors from the two main local works, trade union representatives, women shop stewards, the National Service Officer, the Medical Officer of Health, and a number of councillors.